

**PATENT**

reason relating to the enclosed materials, or should an overpayment be included herein, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct or credit said fees from Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 22-0365/INN643/4-013/58000.

**AMENDMENT**

Please cancel claim 1 as drawn to a non-elected invention. Please cancel claims 63, 102, 112, 117, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please enter the following amended claims.

49. (Twice amended) A storage system for a vehicle having a driver compartment and a cargo area disposed to the rear of the driver compartment within a contiguous enclosure, wherein the enclosure is defined by a floor, a roof, and two opposing side walls which each connect the roof to the floor, and wherein the cargo area includes opposing rear wheel wells extending into the cargo area from the bottom edges of the side panels,

the storage system comprising at least one storage area adjacent to and separated from the cargo area, the storage area being defined by at least a portion of an outwardly bowed exterior side panel, an inner panel, a top and bottom which connect the inner panel to the exterior side panel, and wherein the storage area extends into the cargo area no further than the wheel well extends into the cargo area, wherein at least one section of at least one of the outwardly bowed exterior side panels is hinged to provide access to the storage area therein.

61. (Twice amended) A vehicle having a forward compartment for carrying a driver and an enclosure for passengers, merchandise or equipment wherein the enclosure is disposed to the rear of the driver compartment, and further wherein the enclosure is bounded by exterior, contoured side panels and a rear wall, including at least one rear door;

the vehicle comprising at least one storage area adjacent at least one exterior, contoured side panel and extending into the enclosure of the vehicle, and wherein the side panel adjacent the storage area includes a hinged section effective to provide an opening from the exterior of the vehicle into the storage area, and further wherein the separation width and cross sectional contour of the side panels of the enclosure is substantially the same as the separation width and cross-sectional contour of the forward compartment where it adjoins the side panels of the enclosure.

64. (Twice amended) The vehicle of Claim 61, wherein the storage system is mounted in the side panel of the enclosure on the driver's side of the vehicle.

65. (Twice amended) The vehicle of Claim 61, wherein there is a storage system mounted in the side panels of the enclosure on both sides of the vehicle.

85. (Twice amended) A vehicle comprising a driver's compartment and a rear compartment contained within the same enclosure, the rear compartment including a storage system, the rear compartment comprising:

a floor area bounded on either side by side panels with exterior surfaces defining the width of the rear compartment, and wherein the side panels of the rear compartment are substantially aligned with the driver's compartment,

at least one hinged section in the exterior surface of at least one of the side panels,

at least one storage area located intermediate the side panels, adjacent the at least one hinged section, and extending into a cargo area of the vehicle, wherein the hinged section is configured to provide access to the storage area when the hinged section is in the open position and wherein the width of the storage area is the same or less than the width of the wheel well;

a latch for retaining the at least one hinged contoured side panel section in the closed position; and

a strut for retaining the hinged section in the open position.

86. (Twice Amended) The vehicle of Claim 85, wherein the at least one hinged section is hinged one of horizontally <sup>and</sup> or vertically.

93. (Twice amended) The storage system of Claim 49, wherein the exterior surfaces of the side panels enclosing the cargo area are substantially aligned with the exterior surfaces of the driver's compartment.

114. (Amended) An improved vehicle having a forward compartment configured to contain a driver's seat and a cargo area, wherein the cargo area is defined by a floor panel, a roof, and two opposing side walls which each connect the roof to the floor, having outwardly bowed side panels, wherein the cross-sectional contour of the side panels of the cargo area substantially conform to the exterior of the forward compartment, the improvement comprising:

a storage area accessible only from the exterior of the vehicle, said storage area being located adjacent a rear wheel well and extending along at least a portion of the vehicle's outwardly bowed side panel.

125. (Amended) In a vehicle configured to contain in the interior of the vehicle, one, two or three rows of seats, and further to contain a cargo area behind the last row of seats, wherein the vehicle further contains one or two doors in each side of the vehicle for access to the interior thereof, and a rear wheel well on each side of the vehicle that extends from the external side panel into the interior of the vehicle, the improvement which comprises:

at least one storage area, wherein said storage area is located between at least one of the rearmost doors in one side of the vehicle and the rear of the vehicle on the same side, adjacent to